

## **Recommendations for the Home-based Child Care Study Committee**

### **Representative Dave Heaton and Representative Jodi Tymeson**

***I. Require a state and federal fingerprint background check for all licensed and registered child care providers, as well as non-registered providers caring for kids on the state child care program.***

Current Iowa law requires a state criminal background check and a check of the state's abuse registries. But a check of fingerprints or the national criminal registry is not currently required. Adding these steps would give Iowa one of the strongest background check procedures in the nation.

***II. Establish a licensing system for in-home providers that seek a higher level of accreditation.***

Currently, in-home providers can only be registered. This does not allow for those providers wishing to take on the time and expense of attaining higher level of accreditation. Creating a voluntary license for these providers will help parents identify those high-quality in home providers who have gone the extra mile to meet national standards of child care.

***III. Streamline and coordinate inspections of in-home providers.***

There are a number of agencies that currently perform inspections of providers – DHS, DPH, child care resource and referral, USDA, etc. In many cases, these inspections have different standards for the same issue. Also, one provider can be inspected numerous times in a year while another provider may never be checked at all.

The state should take steps to coordinate the inspection of child care facilities and to ensure that all inspectors are looking at a core set of factors. The state should also set up a database to maintain this information and allow it to be shared between agencies. By taking these steps, the state can inspect more providers in a timely manner.

***IV. Improve information and education to parents about quality child care.***

A presentation by the national child care resource and referral agency association identified a major gap in the information parents have when looking for a child care provider. Community Empowerment Areas should be given additional resources to help educate parents on what to look for in a child care provider. Additionally, more efforts must be taken to inform the public of the child care informational website for parents, that was created by the Legislature in 2005.

***V. Provide additional opportunities/resources for child care provider continuing education***

Providers do have some continuing education opportunities, but many times they are during the time providers are taking care of kids. The state needs to work with ISU extension, child care resource and referral, and community colleges to expand continuing education opportunities at times when they work for providers.

***VI. Implement an electronic benefit transfer program to pay for state child care assistance***

Currently, child care billing is the same as it was in the 1970's – paper filings. By going to an electronic benefit transfer system, the state would be able to pay providers on time and free up the current child care staff to work with providers to improve the quality of child care in Iowa.